

Docket #71659

ROOF MODULE FOR A MOTOR VEHICLE BODY

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a United States National Phase application of International Application PCT/EP2003/001818 and claims the benefit of priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 of German Application DE 102 51 175.6 filed October 31, 2002, the entire contents of which are incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The invention relates to a roof module for a motor vehicle body comprising a reinforcing frame and a roof panel that is fastened thereto, wherein said reinforcing frame can be fastened to the motor vehicle body by means of screw connections and adhesive bonds.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Roof modules for motor vehicle bodies are known in different versions. A prior art version (DE 198 53 820 A1) is introduced as a prefabricated component, which various accessories are mounted to, through the front window opening into the car body and placed from inside against the roof opening and fastened there. The completion of the car body interior is performed subsequently, with it being required to temporarily hang-out motor vehicle body side doors possibly installed already before.

[0004] In another version (DE 100 48 130 A1) the roof module features foldable edge strips that are transfolded to be able to introduce the roof module through a roof opening into the motor vehicle body. Subsequently the edge strips are unfolded again and the roof module is placed from inside against the motor vehicle body and fastened there. All this is too costly.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] Now, therefore, it is the task of the present invention to provide a prefabricated and lacquered roof module equipped with all accessories that can be put onto the motor vehicle body during final assembly.

[0006] This task is solved by a roof module of the species described hereinabove in that the reinforcing frame or roof panel at its edge has a folded flange shaped to a U section, and that an edge strip of the roof panel or reinforcing frame engages into the U section and is bonded there to the reinforcing frame or roof panel, and that the roof module in a vertical projection is

greater than a roof opening in the motor vehicle body. The roof panel and the reinforcing frame may be comprised of pretreated and prelacquered metal sheets (coil coating) so that the supplier needs no lacquer coating units. Furthermore, the roof module may be provided with all the desired accessories both inside and outside. The roof module is not put on in a raw construction state, i.e. before the motor vehicle body is lacquered, but only during final assembly onto an appropriately modified motor vehicle body. The relatively large roof opening, too, facilitates thus the assembly of the interior outfit of the motor vehicle body and of the instrumentation panel, and the usual temporary disassembly of side doors, if any, may be dispensed with.

[0007] It is recommendable to seal an external joint between the folded flange and the roof panel.

[0008] Additional covering and cladding elements are not required, if the proposed procedure is observed.

[0009] The U section may have a support for the front window outside in the area of a front window. In this connection, the roof panel may be provided with a step in the area of the front window, whose height roughly corresponds to the thickness of the front window.

[0010] Furthermore, the U section may have a support in the door area for the side windows and/or a window pane seal co-acting with the side windows. In this connection, the roof panel in the door area may preferably have a step, whose height roughly corresponds to the

thickness of the side window and/or window pane seal.

[0011] The various features of novelty which characterize the invention are pointed out with particularity in the claims annexed to and forming a part of this disclosure. For a better understanding of the invention, its operating advantages and specific objects attained by its uses, reference is made to the accompanying drawings and descriptive matter in which preferred embodiments of the invention are illustrated.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] In the drawings:

[0013] Fig. 1 is a schematic view of a roof panel and of a reinforcing frame not yet connected to it;

[0014] Fig. 2 is a vertical sectional view in the area of a front window of a roof module connected to a motor vehicle body;

[0015] Fig. 3 is an enlarged detail view of the object according to Fig. 2;

[0016] Fig. 4 is a corresponding vertical sectional view in the door area;

[0017] Fig. 5 is a corresponding vertical sectional view in the area of a rear flap;

[0018] Fig. 6 is a corresponding vertical sectional view in the door area with another embodiment.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0019] Referring to the drawings in particular, a roof panel 1 and a reinforcing frame 2
5 belong to the depicted roof module (Fig. 1).

[0020] In Figures 2 to 6, the same reference symbols designate the same parts. The reinforcing frame 2 or the roof panel 1 have a circumferential edge strip 10 and/or 13, as well as a folded flange 11 connected thereto. The folded flange 11 is transfolded over the edge strip 10 and/or 13 and together they form a U section 12. An edge strip 10 and/or 13 of the roof panel 1
10 and/or reinforcing frame 2 engage into the U-section 12 which is bonded with the edge strip 10 and/or 13 via a structural bonding. The external joint between folded flange 11 and edge strip 10 and/or 13 of roof panel 1 or reinforcing frame 2 is sealed with a sealing 6 to provide protection from corrosion. A shaped step 4 of roof panel 1 connects to edge strip 13, so that a support 14 connected to shaped step 4 is mainly flush to the transfolded folded flange 11.

15 [0021] The roof module is fastened in a usual manner with adhesive bonds 5 and screw connections 8 to the motor vehicle body 3.

[0022] Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 depict the roof module fastened to the motor vehicle body 3 in

the area of the front window. Roof panel 1 and reinforcing frame 2 are supported against each other via an adhesive bond 9 at some distance from the edge area. In connection to support 14, roof panel 1 has a step 15, whose height roughly corresponds to the thickness of a non-depicted front window, so that roof panel 1 is mainly flush outside to a front window fastened at the edge side on support 14.

[0023] Fig. 4 shows a vertical section through the roof module in the door area, which is connected to the motor vehicle body 3. Here, too, the edge strip 13 of roof panel 1 passes via a shaped step into a support 16, which step 17 is connected to. Support 16 is provided for a non-depicted side door window and/or the pertaining window pane seal. Step 17 has a height that roughly corresponds to the thickness of the side door window pane and/or window pane seal.

[0024] Fig. 5 shows the configuration of roof panel 1 in the area of a non-depicted rear flap, with the step in the roof panel being dispensed with.

[0025] Fig. 6 shows a vertical section through the roof module in the door area connected to motor vehicle body 3. Here, the edge of roof panel 1 is folded over the edge strip of reinforcing frame 2.

[0026] By way of the measures described hereinabove, the connection of roof panel 1 to the reinforcing frame 2 is made invisible and/or sealed in all areas.

[0027] The roof module can be put onto and fastened to the motor vehicle body 3 in the course of final assembly, after the interior outfit has been introduced through the existing large roof opening into an appropriately modified motor vehicle body and installed there.

[0028] While specific embodiments of the invention have been shown and described in
5 detail to illustrate the application of the principles of the invention, it will be understood that the invention may be embodied otherwise without departing from such principles.